THE REAL STORY BEHIND THE RUSSIA–UKRAINE WAR—AND WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

THE MYTH OF THE UNPROVOKED INVASION

While borders have historically been fluid, the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine was not an unprovoked event unrelated to external factors. Instead, it was closely tied to transparent provocations by NATO in the region. To understand the current situation, we must first address whether Russia is truly an expansionist power seeking to conquer neighbors that were never part of its historic evolution. Many critics utilize a false Munich-style appeasement analogy to describe potential peace deals, but historical data suggests this comparison is inaccurate.

THE DOUBLE-DIGIT RULE AND MILITARY SPENDING

A reliable way to identify an aggressive hegemon is the double-digit rule: true expansionary powers spend a significant portion of their GDP on military infrastructure to support the logistics of invasion and occupation. For example, in the years leading up to World War II, Nazi Germany's military spending rose from 8% of GDP in 1935 to 23% by 1939, eventually reaching 75% by 1944.

In contrast, Russian military spending in the year before the 2022 conflict was only $65 billion, or approximately 3.5% of its GDP. Between 1992 and 2022, Russia's average military spending remained low at 3.8% of GDP. Even since the outbreak of full-scale war, spending has only increased to 6% of GDP, most of which is consumed by the immediate conflict near its own border. These figures indicate that Russia lacks the economic and military capacity to conquer Europe or even its non-Ukrainian neighbors.

THE HISTORICAL CONSTRUCTION OF UKRAINE

The conflict is deeply rooted in territorial disputes involving lands that were historically part of Russia for centuries. The name Ukraine itself translates to "borderlands" in Russian, referring to stateless areas that were only assembled into a formal political entity by Soviet leaders like Lenin, Stalin, and Khrushchev after 1920. Prior to the communist takeover, no country with Ukraine's modern borders ever existed.

The specific regions currently in dispute—Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, Zaporizhia, and Crimea—were historically known as Novorossiya, or "New Russia". These territories were acquired by the Russian Empire under Catherine the Great between 1734 and 1791 through treaties with the Ottoman Empire and the Cossack Hetmanate. During the 18th century, these lands underwent significant Russification and settlement under the direction of Prince Grigori Potemkin. By the late 19th century, these areas were firmly established as part of the Russian Empire.

SOVIET MAP-MAKING AND THE BASTARD SPAWN OF COMMUNISM

Modern Ukraine's borders are the result of administrative decisions made by autocratic Soviet rulers:

- In 1922, Lenin added the Donbas and the Black Sea rim (Novorossiya) to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR).
- In 1939, Stalin added Western territories, such as Lviv and Galicia, after partitioning Poland with Hitler.
- In 1954, Khrushchev transferred Crimea from the Russian SSR to the Ukrainian SSR to secure political support during a succession struggle.

Because these borders were created by communist "blood and iron," they did not necessarily reflect natural ethnic, linguistic, or cultural groupings. From 1922 to 1991, this artificial state was held together only by the totalitarian monopoly on violence.

THE COLLAPSE OF EQUILIBRIUM AND THE MAIDAN COUP

Since gaining independence in 1991, Ukraine has been plagued by internal political and civil strife. Elections were often split 50/50 at the national level, but 80/20 at the regional level, reflecting a deep divide between the nationalist West/Central regions and the Russian-speaking East and South.

This fragile post-communist equilibrium was shattered in February 2014 by a Washington-fomented and financed coup d'état known as the Maidan revolution. Without this external intervention, the partition of this artificial state likely would have occurred naturally, similar to the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia.

THE FAILURE OF THE POST-1991 ORDER

The current crisis highlights the failure of Washington’s decision during the 1990s and 2000s to expand NATO into former Warsaw Pact nations and breakaway Soviet republics. NATO’s mission was effectively over in 1991 when the Soviet threat disappeared. Instead of leading the world toward disarmament, the United States maintained an alliance that now serves as a "stupid charity" for 31 nations, offering no enhancement to American homeland security.

A PATH TOWARD PARTITION AND PEACE

The most sensible path forward is a peace plan that involves the partition of Ukraine, allowing the disputed regions to affiliate with Russia as they have indicated in various referendums. Such a settlement would rectify the failed map-making of communist tyrants and end a proxy war that the United States cannot afford. Furthermore, moving toward partition would challenge the influence of the "Warfare State" and the neoconservative establishment that has saddled America with a $1.5 trillion annual global empire. Adopting a realistic view of history is the only way to resolve a conflict that was never built to last.